

VZCZCXRO4403  
PP RUEHDBU  
DE RUEHMO #5225/01 3041552  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 311552Z OCT 07  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4965  
INFO RUEHXQ/ALL EUROPEAN UNION POST COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MOSCOW 005225

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/31/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [BK](#) [RS](#)  
SUBJECT: RUSSIAN DFM TITOV ON BOSNIA, KOSOVO, AND POLAND

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Burns: 1.4 (b, d).

11. (C) Comment: In an October 31 meeting with the Ambassador, Deputy Foreign Minister Titov reiterated Russian complaints over High Representative Lajcak's invocation of Bosnia powers, which ran counter to assurances given during his Moscow consultations, but stressed Russian support for the Dayton principles. Titov said the GOR believed a compromise was still possible with PM Dodik and that a "stern" approach would be counterproductive. He reiterated the need to close out the HighRep in June 2008 and urged that a "general line" on the crisis be developed in advance of the November 14 UNSC deliberation of the Lajcak report. On Kosovo, Titov praised Troika efforts, while panning an "experts paper" produced by EU Envoy Ischinger, urged open-ended negotiations, and appeared relaxed by the prospect of a unilateral declaration of independence -- questioning whether the EU would find the legal basis it sought in UNSCR 11244. Titov noted FM Jeremic will be in Moscow November 22, but dismissed prospects of a change in Serb position. Titov was moderately upbeat on Polish-Russian relations, noting a dialogue underway between the acting Security Council Secretaries, and reciprocal deputy foreign minister-level

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visits planned. End Summary

Bosnia: Compromise Still Possible  
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12. (C) In an October 31 meeting with the Ambassador, Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov briefed on his recently completed Balkans swing and emphasized the centrality of the Bosnian political crisis to his conversations. Titov was frank about Russian disappointment with High Representative Lajcak's course of action and reliance upon the Bonn powers. Titov said that he conveyed GOR perceptions of Bosnian disappointment over the EU's failure to provide a clear vision of Bosnia's future, in his meeting with Lajcak, along with the public concern that the EU was walking back from an integrationist approach. Titov reiterated GOR arguments that police reform was an artificial measuring stick, since there was no EU "baseline" against which Bosnia should be measured. Lajcak's decision to use the "pretext" of police reform, Titov commented, disappointed the GOR -- in part, because it represented a backsliding from the "common course" agreed upon during Lajcak's Moscow consultations. Russia believed that Lajcak had agreed on the need to devolve authority to Bosnian institutions. Although Lajcak defended his reforms as being only "technical" in nature and not directed against any one group, Titov charged that the High Representative had sowed more doubts with his latest actions. Ambassador urged Titov not to over-react to what were relatively minor steps taken by the High Rep; Titov stressed that Lajcak had overstepped his bounds, and that the GOR would continue to make that clear.

13. (C) Titov maintained that Lajcak had agreed that

compromise was still possible, if certain concessions could be provided to PM Dodik. The GOR was disappointed by the lack of follow-through on Lajcak's part; in particular, the fact that the HighRep did not schedule another meeting with Dodik. This helped create a "politically incorrect" impression that a face-to-face meeting was not necessary, because the outcome was predetermined. Dodik, Titov insisted, wanted a compromise formula and was disappointed by Lajcak's hard line.

¶4. (C) Titov noted that Lajcak enjoyed general respect and support within the GOR (and again favorably mentioned his Moscow university credentials) and Russia did not seek to exploit the unhappiness with Lajcak that could be found in all ethnic quarters of Bosnia. While Russia was critical of Lajcak's recent actions, Titov stressed continued GOR support for the Dayton Accord. In the current crisis, the GOR supported a compromise, and thought its partners' emphasis on a "stern" approach counterproductive. A graceful exit from the political crisis needed to be found. Titov reiterated that Russia's foremost interest was the stability of Bosnia and its territorial integrity. Titov underscored that he met with Bosnia Presidency member Silajdzic, in order to explain that Russia was not pursuing a Srpska-first policy. Silajdzic welcomed Titov's decision not to travel to Banja Luka, which Titov said was a conscious decision by the GOR to send a message to Republika Srpska.

¶5. (C) Titov reiterated that Russia expected the High Representative's mandate to expire in June 2008, and stressed the need for a strategy of transferring authority to an EU successor office. Bosnia's "international protectorate" status, he complained, had deprived the local population of any initiative to take responsibility for the country's political health and development. Individuals needed to be empowered. Titov objected to any approach that promulgated

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EU integration requirements by relying upon Dayton authorities.

¶6. (C) While the MFA was still deliberating on a public statement to be issued in response to the RS national assembly declaration, Titov expressed general concern over the consequences of the on-going crisis and the need to use the period leading up to the UN Security Council discussion of the Lajcak report to agree upon a "general line." Titov agreed with the Ambassador that the main preoccupation had to be Bosnia's stability, particularly in light of the possible developments in Kosovo in December. Titov dismissed RS rhetoric on unification with Serbia, noting that the "ambitions of regional leaders" would never allow domination by Belgrade. Any Dodik statement suggesting otherwise, he said, was for public consumption and nothing more.

Kosovo: Russia Remains Confident  
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¶7. (C) Titov said that his regional swing reinforced the GOR view that Kosovo's neighbors wanted a consensual, negotiated settlement that did not carry with it the seeds of future conflict. If Kosovo pursued a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI), Albania would recognize, but not be the first; Bosnia would be stalemated by the requirement for consensus on issues related to foreign policy; Macedonia would be conflicted, concerned both by the irredentism of its 25 percent Albanian minority and the need for managing cross-border relations with Kosovo; while Bulgaria would follow the EU lead, albeit from the back of the pack given its special relationship with Serbia.

¶8. (C) Titov emphasized Russia's view that the Troika was making progress -- "more progress in the last several months, than in the last several years." While recognizing the impossibility of "bridging the unbridgeable," Titov said the 14 points were a good foundation for further discussion,

since neither party had rejected the document. Titov took issue with EU Envoy Ischinger's paper, rejecting the "naive conceptions" that boiled down to an agreement to disagree. Serbs did not want to "save face," Titov stressed. The GOR hoped that Troika efforts in advance of November 5 would be focused on further developing the 14 points, rather than exploring the Ischinger proposal further. Responding to the Ambassador's query on the status of a similar "CIS" formula, Titov said it remained unacceptable to the Serbs. In a strikingly low-key manner, Titov reiterated that a UDI would not be conducive to Security Council consideration of the Troika report, joked about the need to protect the Christmas and New Year holidays from the conflict, and questioned whether the EU's need for a legal basis for ESDP could be satisfied by UNSCR 1244. "Let's see how they proceed."

¶9. (C) Noting the need to be realistic about Kosovar expectations of independence, Titov said that only by continuing negotiations beyond the December 10 deadline would the international community be able to affirm the seriousness of the Troika format. Only if the Kosovars realized that independence would not fall into their lap would a "purely psychological" barrier be breached, which could trigger greater Kosovar flexibility. In this scenario, Titov maintained, the Serbian presidential elections could be followed by negotiations over a "common roof" that took into account the significant linkages that would need to be maintained between the Serbs and Kosovars in the area of infrastructure and energy.

¶10. (C) The Ambassador took exception to Titov's prognosis, noting that time was running out and the options proposed by the Russians were unrealistic in this regard; he warned that the situation would only worsen over time, and with endless negotiations. Titov replied that Russia was "not afraid of a lot of time," pointing to the Middle East as a model of a long running, but contained, conflict. The Ambassador replied that it was hardly an example that promoted confidence in the stability of the region. Titov insisted that compromise remained possible between the Kosovars and the Serbs, and emphasized the significance of Serbia's November presidential elections. While some within the GOR viewed the elections as another means of reinforcing that this "was no longer Milosevic's Serbia," Titov allowed that the issue was "knotty," with a new government requiring a few months before it could seriously engage. The Ambassador pushed the GOR to encourage Belgrade's support for Kosovo Serb participation in Kosovo's parliamentary elections, with Titov dismissing the elections as insignificant.

¶11. (C) Titov flagged the upcoming visit of Serb FM Jeremic to Moscow on November 22, which would allow for "serious discussions," although he immediately discounted the possibility of any Serbian backtracking from its insistence

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on preserving Kosovo as an inviolable part of Serbia.

Poland: Will it still be "all or nothing?"  
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¶12. (C) In the wake of media reports that Poland had issued direct invitations for Russian inspectors to visit its meat facilities (absent EU mediation), Titov agreed that the new government had sent "certain positive signals," which the Kremlin and MFA had reciprocated. The GOR had "certain hopes" that improvements in the bilateral relationship would continue, with Russia reciprocating a visit of the Polish Acting Deputy National Security adviser. Titov commented that the channel, under Russia's Acting Security Council Secretary Sobolev, provided a useful format for a strategic

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discussion that would not get bogged down by discussions over agricultural issues. Titov noted that Polish Deputy Foreign Minister would come to Moscow soon and, once the new

government took shape, Titov would reciprocate the visit. Noting that the Polish Foreign Minister Fotyga had yet to reply to Lavrov's March 2007 invitation to visit Moscow ("stupidity"), Titov said the GOR had yet to determine whether Poland would move beyond its "all or nothing" approach in diplomatic relations.

¶13. (C) Titov emphasized that Russia understood the importance of Poland, both bilaterally and in the framework of the EU. Moscow was not looking to avoid or marginalize Warsaw, Titov commented. "We want to engage." At the same time, Titov said there was little interest in engaging directly with Poland on missile defense, since "we know where the decisions are being made."

Comment  
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¶14. (C) Titov's relaxed demeanor reflects Russia's marked self-confidence in the lead-up to the December 10 conclusion of the Troika negotiations, which observers here attribute to satisfaction over Russia's "principled stance" that will allow the GOR to "pocket" a Kosovo precedent; the difficulties confronting the EU as they seek legal cover for their presence in Kosovo; and Western responsibility for any regional backlash to a UDI, which Russia believes will ensue. Titov's message on preserving Bosnia's stability and integrity was (mostly) responsible, but the GOR will continue to connect dots between the Kosovo debate and stability throughout the Balkans.  
Burns